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Governor Schwarzenegger Awards Medal of Valor to 42 State Employees

Governor Schwarzenegger today awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor to 42 state employees who demonstrated extraordinary acts of bravery and heroism to save the life of another. The Medal of Valor is the highest honor that California awards to its public servants.

"These brave men and women come from different departments and agencies within our state government, but what they all have in common is their incredible bravery," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "Some of those being honored are not trained for the sort of heroics they performed. But they rose to the challenge and stood tall to make split-second decisions, facing incredibly dangerous circumstances. And in doing so, they saved lives."

The employees receiving today's award represent the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, California Highway Patrol, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Department of Transportation. Award recipients include:

Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC)

Michael Houser and David Raymond, of Sacramento: On August 1, 2003, these ABC Investigators rescued a young man from being choked, kidnapped and robbed by two suspects.

California Highway Patrol (CHP)

Raymond Faulk, of Monterey: On April 16, 2003, this CHP Officer (now Sergeant) rescued a woman attempting suicide by jumping from a freeway over-crossing.

Kevin Austin, of South Los Angeles, and Rene Galindo, of Santa Fe Springs: On September 17, 2003, these CHP Officers rescued a woman attempting suicide by jumping from a freeway over-crossing.

Mark Conner, of San Geronio: On October 15, 2003, this CHP Officer saved an off-duty Fish and Game Warden who was being assaulted with a deadly weapon during an attempted carjacking.

James J. Gaffney, of South Los Angeles: On October 15, 2003, this CHP Officer rescued a man from a vehicle while it was engulfed in flames.

Jason Lee Peavy, of Antelope Valley: On January 10, 2004, this CHP Officer attempted to rescue the driver of a vehicle submerged in the icy waters of the California Aqueduct.

Russell D. Carver, of Ventura: On January 12, 2004, this CHP Officer rescued a man from a burning vehicle only seconds before the entire passenger compartment erupted in flames.

Chris Harris, Austin Matulonis and Mark Pope, of Sacramento: On April 2, 2004, these CHP Officers rescued a man attempting suicide by jumping from the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

Willard E. O'Diear, of Trinity River: On May 3, 2004, this CHP Officer rescued a Humboldt County Deputy Sheriff by leaving a position of cover to fire upon a suspect who was firing a semi-automatic rifle at the deputy, causing the suspect to cease firing and flee.

Christopher Mode, of Merced, and Ericson Sherwood, of Fresno: On August 8, 2004, these CHP Officers rescued a man from the burning passenger compartment of a vehicle.

Jay McPeek, of Alturas: On August 13, 2004, this CHP Officer rescued a man from a burning tractor-trailer.

Jon Kitamura, of Woodland: On August 28, 2004, this CHP Officer rescued four people from the burning passenger compartment of a vehicle.

Kevin H. Berg, of Ukiah: On September 12, 2004, this off-duty CHP Officer rescued a woman by pulling off the large dog that was savagely attacking her.

Julian Irigoyen, of Sacramento: On January 2, 2005, this CHP Officer (now Sergeant) rescued two women from drowning in a canal.

David Kajiwarra and Matthew W. Winter, of Ventura: On January 10, 2005, these CHP Officers rescued and assisted with the rescue of numerous individuals trapped by a major landslide.

Kirk Van Orsdel, of Oceanside: On July 21, 2005, this CHP Sergeant saved the lives of several people by apprehending a violent criminal, following a series of gun battles.

Department of Fish and Game

Matthew Shanley, of Riverside County: On October 15, 2003, this off-duty Fish and Game Warden had a gun pointed at him by a suspect. He prevented the suspect from shooting a CHP Officer by grabbing the gun hand of the suspect and tackling him.

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)

Timothy Main, of Visalia, and James Rajskup, of Hanford: On April 30, 2003, CDF Captain Main and CDF Apparatus Engineer-Paramedic Rajskup rescued an elderly woman from a burning home under extreme, dangerous fire conditions.

Robert F. Green, of Riverside: On October 22, 2003, this CDF Unit Chief restrained an unruly male passenger aboard a commercial flight who had made threats that he had a bomb.

William (Bill) F. Mason, of Victorville, and James Rissmiller, of Highland: On October 26, 2003, these CDF Battalion Chiefs drove through a fire burning across a roadway to rescue four members of a CDF engine crew and two members of the news media.

William R. Clayton, of Carlsbad: On October 26, 2003 while fighting the Cedar Fire, this CDF Division Chief took part in rescuing a man, driving through a series of fire fronts and downed power lines. He also conducted

a scene evaluation at the Valley View Casino and directed arriving engines to attack positions, then coordinated with casino staff to maintain and shelter panicked patrons.

Kevin O'Leary, of Ramona: On October 26, 2003, this CDF Battalion Chief entered a home under extreme, dangerous fire conditions to rescue an elderly occupant.

Patti K. West, of Riverside: On July 19, 2004, this CDF Fire Apparatus Engineer led seven firefighters to safety during a sudden flare up of a wildland fire.

David W. Junette, of Susanville, and Pilot Thomas McConnel, of Palo Cedro: On July 26, 2004, CDF Captain Junette and CDF Pilot McConnel successfully evacuated three individuals from a downed Jet Ranger helicopter during the Straylor Fire in Butte County.

Joseph W. Waterman, of Chester, Tena G. Anderson, of Napa County, and Fredrick Westrip of Shasta County: On July 26, 2004, CDF Battalion Chief Waterman, Fire Captain Anderson and Heavy Fire Equipment Operator Westrip aided the successful rescue of three individuals from a downed Jet Ranger helicopter during the Straylor Fire in Butte County.

Raymond Chaney, of Alpine: On October 26, 2004, this CDF Battalion Chief drove through a series of fire fronts to warn the Barona Ranch Canyon Casino of the imminent danger posed by a fast-approaching fire and helped coordinate a massive rescue of 600 to 800 people.

Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Jonathan B. Bevan, of Oakdale, and Steve Carroll, of Big Bear Lake: On January 20, 2004, Caltrans Maintenance Supervisor Bevan and Caltrans Maintenance Equipment Operator II Carroll provided a safety zone so that a woman trapped in a car could be rescued from plummeting over a snowy mountain cliff.

Henry Harden, of Rialto, and Keith A. Laub, of Yucaipa: On January 20, 2004, Caltrans Maintenance Equipment Operator II Harden and Maintenance Equipment Operator I Laub rescued a woman trapped in a car that was precariously perched on a steep and icy slope. They climbed down to the car to attach a chain to its axle while securing the other end to a Caltrans snowplow.

John Wells III, of Sacramento: On January 21, 2004, this Caltrans Highway Landscape Leadworker, while driving to work, observed smoke coming from the roof of a burning home and rescued five children.

Since the Medal of Valor program began in 1959, a total of 388 medals have been awarded to California state employees who performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the normal call of duty at great risk to their own personal safety or life to save the life of another. Award nominations are made by the employee's department.